

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1712

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, UY

SUBJ: MASS COMMEMORATES 2ND ANNIVERSARY OF SLAYING OF BLANCO
PARTY LEADER GUTIERREZ RUIZ

1. EVENING, MAY 20, A MASS WAS HELD IN MEMORY OF EX-PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND BLANCO PARTY LEADER LUIS HECTOR GUTIERREZ RUIZ, SLAIN BY UNKNOWN SECURITY AGENTS IN BUENOS AIRES TWO YEARS AGO. PRINCIPALLY ORGANIZED BY THE POR LA PATRIA (WILSON FERREIRA) FACTION OF THE BLANCOS, THE MASS DREW 450 PERSONS(PREDOMINANTLY YOUNG) AT A LARGE, DOWNTOWN MONTEVIDEO CHURCH. IN ATTENDANCE WERE MANY BLANCO LEADERS (ALTHOUGH TWO OF THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S "TRIUMVIRATE" WERE ABSENT), REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRENTE AMPLIO (INCLUDING PDC PRESIDENT JUAN PABLO TERRA), AND TWO SCANDANAVIAN DIPLOMATS (THE SWEDISH CHARGE AND A DANISH EMBASSY OFFICER FROM BUENOS AIRES).

2. A SIMILAR MASS WAS CONSIDERED LAST YEAR, BUT THE IDEA WAS ABANDONED IN THE EARLY PLANNING STAGE. THIS YEAR, THE EVENT WAS PUSHED HARD BY JUAN RAUL FERREIRA (EXILED SON OF WILSON FERREIRA, WORKING IN WASHINGTON FOR WOLA), WHO EVENTUALLY PREVAILED OVER STRONG RESISTANCE BY MANY BLANCOS HERE WHO DID NOT CONSIDER THE MOMENT PROPITIOUS AND WERE DISTURBED THAT THE MASS WAS ALSO INTENDED TO
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INCLUDE LEFTIST COLORADO/FRENTE AMPLIO SENATOR ZELMAR MICHELINI, SLAIN WITH GUTIERREZ IN BUENOS AIRES. GUTIERREZ' WIDOW HAD REQUESTED THAT THE MASS BE HELD IN THE CATHEDRAL BY ARCHBISHOP PARTELLI (REPORTEDLY LONG-TIME FAMILY FRIEND), BUT BOTH REQUESTS WERE DENIED. WHEN MICHELINI'S WIDOW ASKED THAT THIS NAME NOT BE INCLUDED, BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUED INCARCERATION OF THEIR DAUGHTER, MARGATITA, A COMPROMISE

SOLUTION OF THE LOS VASCOS CHURCH AND A PARISH PRIEST FOR A PURELY "SPIRITUAL" CEREMONY WAS REACHED.

3. COMMENT: THE PRESENCE OF 450 PERSONS, UNDER POLICE VIGILANCE, FOR THE MEMORIAL SERVICE REPRESENTS A SUCCESS, OF SORTS, FOR THE MASS ORGANIZERS. MANY OBSERVERS HOWEVER, QUESTION THE WISDOM OF SUCH RAKING OF THE ASHES OF THE PAST, PARTICULARLY AT A MOMENT WHEN THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES ARE SEEKING TO PROJECT A RESPONSIBLE IMAGE AND TO OPEN A HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH THE GOV. THE CHOICE OF TWO INDIVIDUALS WITH LEFTIST HISTORIES AND TUPAMARO TIES, AS SYMBOLS FOR SUCH AN EVENT WAS ALSO QUESTIONED.
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